

Application No.: 09/890588

Docket No.: HHI-031US

REMARKS

Upon entry of the following amendment, claims 1-12 are pending. Claims 3-12 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1 is amended herein. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims are requested in view of the remarks below.

Claims 10-12 were withdrawn from consideration in the Office Action dated August 28, 2003, as allegedly directed to inventions that are independent or distinct from the invention originally claimed. Applicant notes that this application was filed under 35 U.S.C. § 371. Therefore, 35 U.S.C. § 372 applies. 35 U.S.C. § 372(b)(2) provides that if the unity of invention of the international application is reexamined under 35 U.S.C. § 121, it is done within the scope of the requirements of the treaty and the Regulations. The Office Action provides no support for such a reexamination under 35 U.S.C. § 121. Applicant respectfully submits that until a *prima facie* case has been made under the statutes, articles and Regulations cited above, that any restriction requirement is improper and must be withdrawn.

The Specification

The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. The Office Action asserts that the term 'interference fit' has not been defined in the specification. In reply, Applicant submits that the term 'interference fit' is no longer found in claim 1.

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Claim Objections

Claim 1 is objected to because of various informalities pertaining to the preamble. Applicant submits that the amendments to claim 1 overcome the objection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Vokes. Applicant traverses this rejection.

The Vokes reference was previously described in Applicant's June 20, 2003 Office Action reply. Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable over Vokes at least because Vokes does not anticipate a radially inner surface of the retaining component and a radially outer surface of the central component having matching contours that inhibit rotation of said central component. Applicant submits that the radially inner surface of the retaining component and radially outer surface of the central component both appear to be circular which do not anticipate matching contours that inhibit rotation. For at least this reason, Vokes does not anticipate all the limitations of claim 1. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 1 as being anticipated by Vokes is overcome.

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Smart. Applicant traverses this rejection.

Smart provides a screw mounting arrangement that can be used with a plastic filter to reduce the likelihood that the items screwed together will loosen. As shown in Figures 1 and 2, ends 22 can interact with the serrated track 4. In an alternative arrangement, shown in Figures 4 and 5, locating members 53 interact with locating track 44.

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Applicant submits that claim 1 is not anticipated by Smart at least because Smart does not disclose a central component being rotatable into the disassembly position when a clamping force exerted by the retaining component upon the central component is exceeded. Even the alternative arrangement of Smart, shown in Figures 4 and 5, does not provide a clamping force exerted by the retaining component that is exceeded to enable rotation of a central component into a disassembly position. The Office Action asserts that element 4 or 44 of Smart is analogous to a retaining component. However, there is no teaching of the serrated track 4 or locating track 44 as providing a clamping force that is exceeded to enable rotation. Instead, the ends 22 and locating member 53 appear to provide a downward and outward force, respectively, during travel along the serrated track 4 and locating track 44, respectively. Neither of these forces or configurations anticipate a central component being rotatable into the disassembly position when a clamping force exerted by the retaining component upon the central component is exceeded. Therefore, Applicant submits that the rejection of claim 1 as being anticipated by Smart is overcome. Claim 2 is patentable over the art at least by way of its dependency from claim 1.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully

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requested to pass this application to issue. Applicant believes no additional fee is due with this response. However, if an additional fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 12-0080, under Order No. HHI-031US from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

Dated: December 29, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

By 

David J. Ridders

Registration No.: 43,882

LAHIVE & COCKFIELD, LLP

28 State Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02109

(617) 227-7400

(617) 742-4214 (Fax)

Attorney For Applicant